



## **NEWS FROM NOAA**

**NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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### **NOAA AWARDS \$43,000 FOR WETLAND RESTORATION ALONG LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN**

The U.S. Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced a \$43,441 grant to the University of New Orleans (UNO) to support the University's Restoration of Historic Wetlands on the South Shore of Lake Pontchartrain project. The project is funded by the Community-based Restoration Program within the NOAA Fisheries Service.

The goal of this project is to restore two acres of marsh and submerged aquatic vegetation along Lake Pontchartrain in the heart of New Orleans. Development and storm damage has reduced historic wetland areas that provide habitat for recreational and commercial fisheries. Reestablishment of these wetlands will help restore ecologic diversity within the lake and provide local schools the opportunity to experience wetland restoration firsthand.

"This continued partnership between NOAA and the University of New Orleans allows both organizations to work directly with the community to restore valuable fisheries habitat and promote environmental stewardship," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "These habitat restoration efforts support NOAA's approach of ecosystem-based management and provide opportunities to educate citizens about the importance of habitat restoration and preservation."

This grant is a continuation of previous restoration work conducted by UNO along Lake Pontchartrain. Coastal Louisiana is currently losing approximately 25 square miles of wetland habitat every year. Community restoration activities, in addition to large-scale restoration programs, are critical for the state's ecologic and economic resources.

"This is an important pioneer project that will lead the way to the eventual restoration of the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain," said Dr. Michael Poirrier, lead investigator on the project with the University of New Orleans.

The NOAA Restoration Center's Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) is a financial and technical assistance program that promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional, and local level to restore fisheries habitat. NOAA CRP works with organizations and government to support locally-driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine, and riparian areas. NOAA CRP funds on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that (1) offer educational and social benefits for citizens and their communities, and (2) provide long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources.

Each year, NOAA awards approximately \$900 million in grants to members of the academic, scientific and business communities to assist the agency in fulfilling its mission to study the Earth's natural systems in order to predict environmental change, manage ocean resources, protect life and property, and provide decision makers with reliable scientific information. NOAA goals and programs reflect a commitment to these basic responsibilities of science and service to the nation for the past 35 years.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

Community-based Restoration Program: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>